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NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO GO BACKWARD ON FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Washington, May 15, 2003 - WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Congressman Mike Pence delivered the following statement from the House floor today:

“I want to be clear on this issue. I’m pro-life, and I don’t apologize for it. But there is no choice in China. There is no woman’s right to choose in China. There is a policy of forced, coercive abortion and family planning. Whether or not academics who first observed it were discredited entirely, there is a policy of forced abortion.

“With regard to the UNFPA role, Madame Chairman, I will quote none other than Secretary of State Colin Powell, who said on July 21, 2002, ‘the UNFPA’s support of and involvement in China’s population planning activities allows the Chinese government to implement more effectively its program of coercive abortion; therefore, it is not permissible to continue funding of the UNFPA at this time,’ so said US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

“It is why we are here today—because there is an attempt to change the language first adopted in Kemp-Kasten in the 1985 Supplemental Appropriations Act, that barred funding to organizations that support or participate in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization – the language adopted in the International Relations Committee essentially creates a safe harbor where as long as the UNFPA claims ignorance of China’s barbaric birth control policies, they can receive U.S. funds.

“The reality is the UNFPA has a history of supporting China’s coercive family planning program. Sven Burmeister of the UNFPA actually called China’s population control policies, ‘A gift to mankind.’

“It is barbarism at its worst. I stand therefore in strong support of Smith, Oberstar and Hyde.

“It is not time to back up on fundamental human rights protections.”

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